

## **Project Summary/Abstract**

**Project Title:** Massachusetts Health Professions Pathways Initiative

**Applicant Name:** Commonwealth Corporation (on behalf of the Commonwealth of MA)

**Applicant Address:** 529 Main Street, Suite 1M8, Boston, MA 02129-1122

**Contact Phone Numbers:** Rebekah Lashman 617 717 6917 (voice); 617 242 7660 (fax)

**Email Address:** [rlashman@commcorp.org](mailto:rlashman@commcorp.org) **Web Site Address:** [www.commcorp.org](http://www.commcorp.org)

On behalf of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Commonwealth Corporation and the state's Health Professions Pathways Partnership (the Partnership) are proposing to provide 816 TANF recipients and 716 low income residents (1,532 individuals) over five years with a continuum of health care exploration, intensive coaching and case management, academic and English language skills development and technical skills training to prepare them for an initial position and subsequently advancement to higher level positions in the health care workforce. Our TANF population is characterized by low levels of educational attainment – 40% have not completed high school and an additional 42% have only earned a high school credential. In addition, 20% speak a language other than English as their primary language. The health sector offers a significant number of entry-level opportunities and there are significant vacancies in higher level well-paying positions. However, individuals with low levels of educational attainment and low literacy, math and science skills are not academically prepared for programs that offer the certificates and degrees required for advancement.

We are targeting CNA, EMT, Home Care Aide, Home Health Aide, Personal Care Attendant, Medical Assistant, and Pharmacy Aide occupations for initial placement and Dental Assistant, LPN, RN, Surgical Technologist, and Medical/Clinical Laboratory Technician and Technologist positions for advancement. The Partnership consists of eight local workforce investment boards (representing 10 communities with high poverty levels and more than 50% of the state's TANF caseload) and their health care employer partners. The Partnership also includes the Department of Transitional Assistance, the state Workforce Investment Board, the Division of Apprenticeship Training, the Secretariats of Labor and Workforce Development and Health and Human Services, the Division of Adult and Community Learning Services, the Office of Refugees and Immigrants, Commonwealth Corporation, the MA AHEC Network, the MA Senior Care Association/Foundation, the MA Council of Home Care Aide Services, the MA Association of Community Action Agencies and a large acute care hospital - Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. The Partnership will provide policy and practice expertise to the initiative.

Each local workforce investment board, in consultation with health care employers, community based organizations and community colleges, has designed services that are customized to their labor market. However, all regions have the following components in common: a multi-year relationship with participants that provides a continuum of services from pre-employment through initial placement, retention and advancement; long term coaching/case management; community and workplace adult basic education and ESOL; technical skills training for initial placement with health employers that have adopted a "grow our own skilled worker" strategy; and technical skills training for advancement to higher level positions. We will also test several new service strategies: a health careers exploration program offered at career centers; ABE and ESOL contextualized to health care; health skills programs integrated with remedial education at community colleges; and distance learning as a complement to classroom instruction.